

Saquinavir

sa-KWIN-a-veer

Brand Name: Fortovase, Invirase

Drug Class: Protease Inhibitors

Saquinavir, also known as Fortovase, and saquinavir mesylate, also known as Invirase, belong to the class of medicines called protease inhibitors (PIs). PIs act by blocking protease, a protein that HIV needs to make more copies of itself.

HIV/AIDS-Related Uses

Saquinavir mesylate was approved by the FDA on December 6, 1995, and saquinavir was approved by the FDA on November 7, 1997. Both are approved for use with other antiretroviral agents in the treatment of HIV infection.

Although the two drugs are very similar, saquinavir mesylate offers key advantages over saquinavir, including fewer pills to take each day and smaller pill size. Because of the decreased demand for saquinavir, the manufacturer will discontinue this formulation by February 15, 2006; saquinavir mesylate will continue to be available as the preferred formulation. If you are currently taking saquinavir, talk to your doctor about alternative treatment options.

These medicines do not cure or prevent HIV infection or AIDS and do not reduce the risk of passing the virus to other people.

Dosage Form/Administration

Saquinavir comes in liquid-filled soft gelatin capsules. Saquinavir mesylate comes in tablets and hard gelatin capsules. Both forms are taken by mouth and should be taken with food.

On December 29, 2003, the FDA announced that saquinavir mesylate should always be taken along with ritonavir, another PI.

Recommended Daily Dose

The recommended dose of saquinavir is 1,200 mg (taken as six 200 mg capsules) three times a day or 1,000 mg given along with 100 mg of ritonavir two times a day. The recommended dose of saquinavir mesylate is 1,000 mg (taken as either two 500 mg tablets or five 200 mg capsules) given along with 100 mg of ritonavir two times a day. Both saquinavir and saquinavir mesylate should be taken 2 hours after a meal. Saquinavir and saquinavir mesylate cannot be used interchangeably.

Some patients may benefit from different doses of saquinavir or saquinavir mesylate. Patients should always take saquinavir and saquinavir mesylate as prescribed by their doctors.

Contraindications

Patients should tell a doctor about any medical problems before taking this medicine.

Possible Side Effects

Along with its desired effects, saquinavir can cause some serious unwanted effects, including changes in body fat, increased bleeding in patients with hemophilia, high sugar levels in the blood, and onset or worsening of diabetes. Individuals should tell a doctor if they have any of these side effects.

Other side effects may not be serious and may lessen or disappear with continued use of the medicine. Less serious side effects of this medicine include anxiety; change in sense of taste; constipation; depression; diarrhea; dizziness; eczema; gas; generalized muscle pain or weakness; headache; mouth sores; nausea; stomach pain; vomiting; trouble sleeping; numbness, pain, or tingling in the hands or feet; rash; unusual tiredness; and warts. Individuals should tell a doctor if these side effects continue or are bothersome.

Drug and Food Interactions

A doctor should be notified of any other medications being taken, including prescription, nonprescription (over-the-counter), or herbal medications.

Clinical Trials

For information on clinical trials that involve Saquinavir, visit the ClinicalTrials.gov web site at <http://www.clinicaltrials.gov>. In the Search box, enter: Saquinavir AND HIV Infections.

Saquinavir



Manufacturer Information

Saquinavir

Roche Laboratories
340 Kingsland Street
Nutley, NJ 07110
(973) 235-5000

Invirase

Roche Laboratories
340 Kingsland Street
Nutley, NJ 07110
(973) 235-5000

Fortovase

Roche Laboratories
340 Kingsland Street
Nutley, NJ 07110
(973) 235-5000

For More Information

Contact your doctor or an AIDSinfo Health
Information Specialist:

- Via Phone: 1-800-448-0440 Monday - Friday,
12:00 p.m. (Noon) - 5:00 p.m. ET
- Via Live Help: http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/live_help
Monday - Friday, 12:00 p.m. (Noon) - 4:00 p.m. ET